This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

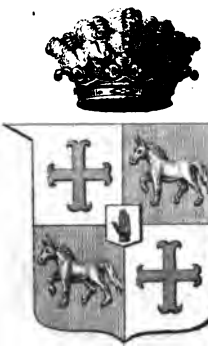
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google



Sir Joseph Copley Bart.

Digitized by Google

PRESENTED TO THE LIBRARY

BY

PROFESSOR H. G. FIEDLER

Fiedler J 9.55.1

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE SORROWS OF *WERTER.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Copley

THE SORROWS OF WERTER:

A GERMAN STORY.

——Tædet cœli convexa tueri.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY,
PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.LXXIX.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THOSE who expect a Novel will be disappointed in this work, which contains few characters and few events; and the design of which is to exhibit a picture of that disordered state of mind, too common in our own country. It is drawn by the masterly hand of Mr. Goethé *, *and is perhaps little more than the relation of a fact which happened within his*

* Doctor of Civil Law, and author of some dramatic pieces which are much esteemed.

knowledge.

Digitized by Google

knowledge. It went through ſeveral editions in German, and ſoon made its way into France. About two years ſince the Engliſh tranſlator met with it; and being ſtruck with the uncommon genius and originality of the thoughts, and the energy with which they are expreſſed, tranſlated ſome of the letters from the French; and led on by the beauty of the work, which encreaſed in proportion as it was attended to, the whole was inſenſibly finiſhed; and as no tranſlation from the German has hitherto appeared, it is now offered to the Public.

Among the number of pamphlets which this little work gave occaſion to, there were

Digitized by Google

were not wanting some which censured it; and Mr. Goethé *has been called the apologist of Suicide, by those who, not distinguishing the* Author *from the* Work, *very absurdly ascribed to him the erroneous sentiments which he has given to his principal Character,—a method of criticism which would equally affect all the epic and tragic writers that ever existed.*

WERTER *appears to have been strongly impressed with sentiments of religion; and it is not to be wondered at, that in his state of mind they should take an irregular form, and sometimes border upon extravagance. A few expressions which had this appearance, have*

Digitized by Google

been omitted by the French, and a few more by the Engliſh tranſlator, as they might poſſibly give offence in a work of this nature.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

P. 9. l. 7. *for* Mellaſina, *r.* Meluſina.
P. 19. l. 12. *for* Winhelmann, *r.* Winkelmann.
P. 20. l. *ult. for* conſort, *r.* wife.
P. 81. l. 3. *for* ſearch, *r.* ſeaſon.
P. 133. l. 6. *dele the ſemicolon after* miſery; *and place it after* her.
P. 150. l. 5. *for* Wolſtein, *r.* Wetſtein.

VOL. II.

P. 12. l. 8. *before* Diſtaſte, *place* And.
P. 27. l. 5. *for* dear, *r.* down.
P. 39. l. 13. *for* meet, *r.* met.
P. 52. l. 8. *for* reaſon, *r.* reaſons.
P. 116. l. 14. *for* no, *r.* a.
P. 171. l. 6. *for* Galoth, *r.* Galotti.

WERTER,

Digitized by Google

WERTER, &c.

LETTER I.

May 4.

I AM glad that I went away.—Could I leave you, my companion, my friend, that I might be more at eaſe? The heart of man is inexplicable. But you forgive me, I know you do. The connections I had formed, were they not ſufficient to torment ſuch a diſpoſition as mine? Poor

Digitized by Google

Eleonora! But am I to be blamed for the tenderneſs which took poſſeſſion of her heart, whilſt I was admiring the beauty of her ſiſter? No! ſurely I am innocent: yet perhaps not entirely ſo; I might encourage her affection, and you have ſeen me pleaſed, amuſed, with the ſimple expreſſion of her tenderneſs*. Many cauſes might I find of reproach; but I promiſe you to deſiſt, my dear friend. I will not always be looking back and dwelling on the painful remembrance of the ſuf-

* This firſt object of his affection is ſuppoſed to be dead, and has nothing to do with the following ſtory.

Digitized by Google

ferings I have endured. I will enjoy the preſent and forget the paſt. You are certainly in the right; that fatal diſpoſition which makes us recal paſt ſcenes and paſt ſorrows, greatly adds to the number of the wretched.

Be ſo good to tell my mother that I am employed about her affairs, and that I ſhall ſoon write to give her an account of them. I have ſeen my aunt: inſtead of being ill-tempered and malevolent, as ſhe was repreſented to me, ſhe is the moſt chearful agreeable woman you ever ſaw, and has the beſt heart in the world. I explained to her my mo-

Digitized by Google

ther's wrongs, with regard to that part of her portion which has been kept back. She told me the motives for her own conduct, and the terms upon which ſhe is very willing to give up the whole, and do more than we have aſked. But I will ſay no more on the ſubject at preſent; only aſſure my mother, that every thing will go on well. I find on this occaſion, as on many others, that neglect and miſunderſtandings create more trouble and uneaſineſs, than diſhoneſty and malice; and they are indeed much more frequent alſo.

I am very well pleaſed with my ſituation here. Solitude in this terreſtrial

paradiſe

Digitized by Google

paradiſe is a medicine to my mind. The delight of ſpring touches my heart, and gives freſh vigour to my ſoul. Every tree, every buſh, is full of flowers, and a delicious perfume fills the air. The town itſelf is diſagreeable; but the fineſt kind of country, and the greateſt natural beauties, are in its environs. Upon one of the neighbouring hills, which form a chain, and diverſify our landſcape, the late Marquis of M. made a garden: it is ſimple, and at firſt ſight it is eaſy to perceive that it was not laid out by a gardener, but by a man of taſte and feeling for his own enjoyment. I have already

Digitized by Google

given ſome tears to the memory of its departed maſter, in an arbour that is now almoſt in ruins, which was his favourite ſpot, and is at preſent mine. I ſhall ſoon have entire poſſeſſion of this garden; the gardener is in my intereſt, and he won't be a loſer by it.

LETTER II.

May 10.

MY mind is calm and ſerene, like the firſt fine mornings of ſpring. Solitude and tranquillity, in a country ſo ſuited to a diſpoſition like mine, give me an enjoyment of life.

Digitized by Google

life. Life itſelf is happineſs, and the pleaſure of mere exiſtence ſo entirely abſorbs me, that I neglect my talents; I don't draw, I can't make a ſtroke with the pencil, and yet I am a greater painter than ever. Thin undulating vapours are ſpread over the plain; thick tufted trees defend me from the meridian ſun, which only checkers my ſhade with a few rays. Here, extended on the long graſs near the fall of a brook, I admire the infinite variety of plants, and grow familiar with all the little inſects that ſurround me, as they hum amongſt the flowers, or creep in the graſs. Then I feel the divine

Digitized by Google

breath of that all-powerful Being which created us; whoſe eternal love ſupports and comforts us. A darkneſs ſpreads over my eyes; heaven and earth ſeem to dwell in my ſoul and abſorb all its powers, like the idea of a beloved miſtreſs. Oh! that I could expreſs, that I could deſcribe, theſe great conceptions, with the ſame warmth, with the ſame energy, that they are impreſſed on my ſoul! but the ſublimity of them aſtoniſhes and overpowers me.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER III.

May 12.

FAIRIES and Genii hover over my ſteps, or the moſt lively imagination influences my ſenſes and fills my heart. All Paradiſe is before me. Here is a fountain, to which I am attached by a ſort of enchantment, like Mellaſina and her ſiſters. It is a ſpring of pure and clear water, which guſhes from the rock, in a cave at the bottom of one of the hills; about twenty rough ſteps lead to it; the high trees which hang over it, the cool refreſhing air of the place, every thing is agreeable,

Digitized by Google

ble, intereſting, ſtriking. I never fail to go to it every day, and generally paſs an hour there. The young girls come from the town to fetch water from it—innocent and neceſſary employment, and formerly the occupation of kings daughters. The time of the patriarchs preſents itſelf to my imagination. I ſee our anceſtors concluding treaties and making alliances by the ſide of fountains, propitious angels bearing witneſs. Whoever does not enter into theſe ſenſations, my dear friend, has never really enjoyed cool repoſe by the ſide of a ſpring, after a long ſummer's walk.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER IV.

May 13.

YOU offer me books; I will have nothing to do with them: for heaven's ſake don't ſend me any. I don't wiſh to be again guided, heated, agitated. Alas! my heart is of itſelf but too much agitated already. I want ſtrains that may lull me; and Homer furniſhes them in abundance. Often have I ſtrove to calm the blood that ſeemed boiling in my veins; often have I endeavoured to ſtop the keen and ſudden paſſions of my heart—But 'tis not to you that I need explain its feelings;

Digitized by Google

feelings; you have often ſeen with concern my quick tranſitions from ſorrow to immoderate joy, and from ſoft melancholy to violent and dangerous paſſions. My heart is like a ſick child; and like a ſick child I let it have its way:—But that between ourſelves; for I know I ſhould be blamed for it.

LETTER V.

May 15.

I AM already very much known and beloved by all the common people here, particularly the children. At firſt when I took notice of them

Digitized by Google

them and ſpoke to them, they anſwered me rather roughly, and thought I meant to inſult them. However, I was not diſcouraged; but I found the truth of an obſervation I had often made before—that people of condition keep their inferiors at a great diſtance, as if they could loſe their dignity by coming near them. It is only a ſchool-boy's wantonneſs, or very poor pretence to wit, which could poſſibly make any body affect to deſcend to the ſame level with their inferiors, in order afterwards to treat them with contempt and ridicule. I know that we are not, nor cannot be all equal; but

Digitized by Google

whoever keeps aloof from the people, in order to gain reſpect, I look upon as a coward, who hides himſelf leaſt he ſhould not be able to ſtand before his adverſary.

The laſt time I was at the fountain, I found a young woman on the ſteps, with her pail ſtanding by her, waiting till ſomebody came who might help to put it on her head. "Shall I help you, my dear?" I ſaid. "Oh! no! Sir," ſhe anſwered, colouring. "Make no ceremony," ſaid I, and helped her to lift the pail; ſhe thanked me, and went up the ſteps.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER VI.

May 17.

I HAVE made many acquaintance here; but I have as yet no ſociety. I don't know what it is in me that can attract the inhabitants of this city; but they ſeek me, attach themſelves to me, and then I am ſorry that I can go no further with them. You aſk me, what ſort of people they are here? Juſt ſuch, my dear friend, as are to be met with every where elſe. Men are much the ſame. The generality are forced to labour the greateſt part of their time, merely to procure nouriſhment;

Digitized by Google

riſhment; and the ſmall portion that remains is ſo irkſome to them, that they are contriving every method in their power to get rid of it. Such is the lot of man!

However, there is a ſort of people, very good, and very amiable, with whom I often forget myſelf, and am diſſipated enough to enjoy a great deal of that pleaſure which is natural to us. A chearful meal, a neat table, gaiety with frankneſs and openneſs of heart, a walk, a dance, and other little amuſements in their company, have a good effect on my diſpoſition: but then it is neceſſary that I ſhould forget thoſe other qualities

Digitized by Google

qualities in me which lie dormant, uſeleſs; and which I am even obliged carefully to conceal from them. Alas! this idea ſinks my ſpirits! and yet, my dear friend, 'tis the fate of all that are like me, not to be underſtood.

Why have I no longer the friend of my youth? or why did I ever know her? I might ſay to myſelf, "Werter, it is a vain purſuit; thou art ſeeking what is not to be found!" But I had found it: I did find and know an exalted mind, which raiſed me beyond myſelf, and made me all that I am capable of being. All the powers of my ſoul were ex-

Digitized by Google

tended, and the deep ſentiment which nature engraved on my heart, was unfolded. What an intercourſe! Our ideas, our expreſſions, were thoſe of nature; and the pureſt affection warmed our hearts: and now—but ſhe was before me in the career; ſhe is gone, and has left me alone in the world. Her memory will be ever dear to my heart. Oh! I can never forget the ſtrength of her mind, and the indulgence of her temper.

A few days ſince I met with Mr. V. an agreeable young man, with a very pleaſing countenance. He is lately come from the univerſity; and does not

Digitized by Google

not think himſelf a prodigy, though he may perhaps ſee his ſuperiority to many that he meets with. Indeed he appears to have applied a good deal, and has acquired much knowledge. Having heard that I underſtood Greek, and could draw (two very extraordinary things in this country) he came immediately to ſee me, and diſplayed his whole ſtock of literature, from Batteux to Wood, and from De Piles to Winhelmann; aſſured me he had read all the firſt part of Sultzer's Theory, and was in poſſeſſion of a manuſcript of De Heyne's on the Study

Digitized by Google

of the Antique. I forgave him all this.

I am become acquainted too with a very worthy man, who is ſteward to the prince: he is free and open in his manner, and loves ſociety. I am told that nothing is more pleaſing than to ſee him ſurrounded by his family. He has nine children; and the eldeſt daughter is much talked of and admired. He gave me an invitation to his houſe, and I intend going the firſt opportunity. He is about a league and a half from hence, at a hunting-lodge which the prince gave him leave to inhabit, after the loſs of his conſort: he

Digitized by Google

he loved her extremely; and could not bear to continue in the ſteward's houſe, where ſhe died.

I have beſides fallen in with ſome ridiculous people, or rather they have put themſelves in my way. Every thing in them is inſupportable: but worſt of all are their profeſſions of friendſhip. Adieu. I think this letter muſt pleaſe you; it is all hiſtorical.

LETTER VII.

May 22.

THAT life is but a dream, is the opinion of many; and it is alſo mine. When I ſee the narrow li-

Digitized by Google

mits which confine the penetrating, active genius of man; when I ſee, that all his powers are waſted to ſatisfy mere neceſſities, the only end of which is to prolong a miſerable exiſtence; that our ſeeming care, with regard to certain enquiries, is but a blind reſignation; and that we only amuſe ourſelves with painting brilliant figures and ſmiling landſcapes on the walls of our priſon, whilſt we ſee on all ſides of us the boundary which confines us: when I conſider theſe things, my dear friend, I am ſilent: I examine myſelf; and what do I find? Alas! more vague deſires, preſages, and viſions,

Digitized by Google

viſions, than I find of conviction, truth, and reality: then all is chaos and confuſion before my eyes; and dreaming like others, I let myſelf be carried away by the ſtream.

All wiſe inſtitutors and learned teachers agree, that children are ignorant of the cauſe which excites their will. But that the great children, as well as the little ones, ſhould wander upon this earth, without knowing whence they came, or whither they go; without any certain motives for their conduct, but guided, like them, by biſcuits, ſugar plumbs, and rods; this is what nobody is

Digitized by Google

willing to acknowledge, and yet nothing, I think, can be more evident.

I foreſee what you will ſay in anſwer to this; and I will allow, that the happieſt amongſt us are thoſe, who, like children, think not of the morrow, amuſe themſelves with playthings, dreſs and undreſs their dolls, watch with great reſpect before the cupboard where mama keeps the ſweetmeats, and when they get any, eat them directly, and cry for more: Theſe are certainly happy beings. Many alſo are to be envied, who dignify their paltry employments, ſometimes even their paſſions, with pom-

Digitized by Google

pompous titles; and who repreſent themſelves to mankind as beings of a ſuperior order, whoſe occupation it is to promote their welfare and glory. But the man who in all humility acknowledges the vanity of all theſe things; obſerves with what pleaſure the wealthy citizen transforms his little garden into paradiſe; with what patience the poor man bears his burthen; and that all wiſh equally to behold the ſun yet a little longer; he too may be at peace; he creates a world of his own, and is happy alſo becauſe he is a man: but however limited his ſphere, he preſerves in his boſom the idea of liberty, and feels

Digitized by Google

feels that he has it in his power to quit his priſon.

LETTER VIII.

May 26.

YOU know my way of chooſing a little favorite ſpot; how I make my arrangements, and ſettle myſelf in it. I have found one here which entirely ſuits me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim. It is very agreeably ſituated on the ſide of a hill; from one of the paths which lead out of the village, you have a view of the whole country; and there is a good old woman who ſells wine,

Digitized by Google

coffee, and tea, there: but better than all this are two lime-trees before the church, which ſpread their branches over a little green, ſurrounded by barns and cottages. I have ſeen few places more retired and peaceful. I ſend for a chair and table from the old woman's, and there I drink my coffee, and read Homer. It was by accident that I diſcovered this place, one fine afternoon: all was perfect ſtillneſs; every body was in the fields, except a little boy about four years old, who was ſitting on the ground, and holding between his knees a child of about ſix months; he preſſed it to his boſom with

Digitized by Google

with his little arms, which made a ſort of great chair for it, and notwithſtanding the vivacity which ſparkled in his black eyes, he ſat perfectly ſtill. Quite delighted with the ſcene, I ſat down on a plough oppoſite, and had great pleaſure in drawing this little picture of brotherly tenderneſs. I added a bit of the hedge, the barn-door, and ſome broken cart-wheels, without any order, juſt as they happened to lie; and in about an hour I found I had made a drawing of great expreſſion, and very correct deſign, without having put in any thing of my own. This confirmed me in the reſolution

I had

Digitized by Google

I had before made, only to copy Nature for the future. Nature is inexhauſtible, and alone forms the greateſt maſters. What is alledged in favour of rules, is nearly the ſame as what is ſaid in favour of the laws of ſociety: An artiſt formed upon them, will never produce any thing abſolutely bad or diſguſting; as a man, who obeys the laws, and obſerves decorum, can never be a decided villain, or a very intolerable neighbour. But yet, ſay what you will of rules, they alter the true features, and the natural expreſſion. You will tell me, that they only lop off ſuperfluous branches, and prevent the

Digitized by Google

the extravagant. Let us compare talents to love, my dear friend. Let us ſuppoſe a man attached to a young woman, dedicating to her every hour of the day, wearing his health, laviſhing his fortune, to convince her each moment that he is entirely devoted to her. Then comes a man of cold and correct underſtanding; a man who acts perhaps in a public character; and this very reſpectable perſon ſays to him, "My young friend, love is a natural paſſion, but it ſhould be kept within due bounds: Make a proper diviſion of your time; give ſome to your miſtreſs, reſerve the reſt for buſineſs;

Digitized by Google

buſineſs; calculate your income, and out of the ſuperfluity make preſents to her, but that only from time to time, on her birth-day, or ſuch like occaſions." If the young man takes this advice, he may be a very uſeful member of ſociety, extremely ſerviceable to his prince; but as to his love it is annihilated; and if he is an artiſt, his genius is fled. Oh! my friend, the torrent of genius would not be ſo confined in its courſe; its impetuous waves would riſe and aſtoniſh us, but that cold and narrow-minded men have taken poſſeſſion of the two ſhores; they have built houſes and planted gardens

Digitized by Google

gardens on its banks; they tremble for their little habitations, and dig trenches, and raiſe dams, to prevent the danger which threatens them.

LETTER IX.

May 27.

I Fell into declamation and ſimilies, I find; and my enthuſiaſm made me forget to finiſh my narrative. Quite loſt in my ideas of painting, which I unfolded to you at large in my laſt letter, I ſat for two hours upon the plough, and towards evening a young woman with a baſket

on

Digitized by Google

on her arm came running to the children, who had not moved in all that time. "You are a very good boy, Philip," ſhe called out. I got up and went towards her, and aſked if ſhe was the mother of thoſe pretty children: ſhe anſwered, that ſhe was, gave the eldeſt a cake, took the little one in her arms, and kiſſed it with a mother's tenderneſs. "I left the young child with Philip," ſaid ſhe, "while I went to the town with his brother to buy ſome white bread, ſome ſugar, and an earthen pot to make broth for Jenny to-night: the boys broke our earthen pot yeſterday as they were quarrelling for the meat."

Digitized by Google

I enquired where her other ſon was; and whilſt ſhe was telling me that he was driving home two geeſe, he came ſkipping up to us, and gave Philip a little ozier twig. I continued talking with the mother, and found ſhe was the ſchool-maſter's daughter, and that her huſband was gone to Holland upon the death of an uncle he had there. "My huſband found he ſhould be cheated of the inheritance," ſaid ſhe; "for he wrote and received no anſwer to his letters, and ſo he went himſelf. I have not heard of him ſince he ſat out. God grant that no harm may have happened to him!" I left this

Digitized by Google

this good woman with regret, gave her a creutzer to buy white bread for little Jenny when she went next to the town, and a creutzer apiece to the boys, and so we parted.

Yes, my dear friend, when I am no longer master of myself, nothing is more calculated to appease the tumult of my senses, than the sight of such a tranquil being. She moves with a happy thoughtlessness in the confined circle of her existence; day after day passes without disquietude; and the falling leaves raise no idea, but that of approaching winter.

Since that first evening I have

Digitized by Google

gone very often to the ſame place: the children are become familiar with me; they have a bit of ſugar when I drink coffee, and at night they partake of my whey and bread and butter. On Sunday they regularly receive their creutzer; for if I am not there after evening ſervice, the old woman has orders to make the diſtribution.

They are quite at their eaſe with me; tell me all they hear, and their ſimplicity pleaſes me much. Their mother uſed perpetually to be calling out, to tell them they would be troubleſome to the gentleman; and it is with great difficulty I have at

Digitized by Google

length prevailed upon her to let them alone.

LETTER X.

June 16.

WHY don't I write to you?—Do you pretend to penetration, and aſk ſuch a queſtion? You ſhould have gueſſed that I was well, but that—in a word, I had found a perſon that is ſtill nearer to my heart—that I had found—I know not what I have found.

Regularly to give you an account how I learnt to diſtinguiſh the moſt amiable of women, would be diffi-

Digitized by Google

cult. I am contented, happy; and consequently a bad historian.

I must not call her an angel; that, you will tell me, every body says of the woman he loves: and yet I cannot describe to you how perfect she is, nor why she is so perfect; she has captivated all my senses.

So much simplicity, with such an understanding; so mild, and yet so animated; a mind so placid, and a life so active. But all these are only the common-place phrases of abstract ideas, and don't express a single character or feature. Some other time —but it must be now or never. For, between ourselves, I have, since I be-

Digitized by Google

I began my letter, been ſeveral times going to throw down my pen and fly to her: I made a vow not to go thither this morning; and I run every moment to the window to ſee if the ſun is ſtill high.

I was not able to hold out; I went there: I am now returned; and whilſt I am eating my bread and butter, will write to you, my dear friend. Nothing can be more touching than to ſee her in the midſt of her little family. But if I go on in this manner, you will know no more at the end of my letter, than you do at the beginning. Be all attention then: for I ſhall

Digitized by Google

endeavour to give ſome method and order to my relation, and enter into a great many details.

I wrote you word ſome time ago, that I had made an acquaintance with Mr. J. the prince's ſteward; and that he had invited me to go and ſee him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. I neglected going however; and perhaps ſhould never have gone, if chance had not diſcovered to me the hidden treaſure which it contained.

Some of our young men propoſed a little dance in the country, in which I very readily joined. I choſe a good pretty girl for my partner, and

Digitized by Google

and rather agreeable too, but nothing very ſtriking; and it was agreed that I ſhould take a coach, and with my partner and her aunt, ſhould call upon Charlotte, and carry her to the ball. "You will ſee a very charming girl," ſaid the young lady, when we came into the avenue which leads to the hunting-lodge. "And take care you don't fall in love with her," added her aunt. "Why?" ſaid I. "Becauſe ſhe is already engaged to a very worthy man," ſhe replied, "who is now gone to ſettle his affairs upon the death of his father, and ſolicit a very lucrative employment." This intelligence appeared a matter of great indifference

to

Digitized by Google

to me. When we arrived at the gate, the ſun was ſunk near the tops of the mountains, the air was heavy, and low black clouds ſeemed to be gathering in the horizon. The women began to be apprehenſive, and I foreſaw myſelf a great probability of our party being interrupted; but in order to give them comfort, I put on a very ſagacious look, and aſſured them the weather would be fine.

I got out of the coach. A maid came down, and deſired us to wait one minute for her miſtreſs. I croſſed the court, went up ſtairs, and as I entered the apartment I ſaw ſix children, the eldeſt of which was but

Digitized by Google

but eleven years old, all jumping round a young woman, very elegantly shaped, and dressed in a plain white gown with pink ribands. She had a brown loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices of bread and butter, which she distributed in a graceful and affectionate manner to the children, according to their age and appetite. Each held up its little hands all the time the slice was cutting, thanked Charlotte when he received it, and then ran to the door to see the company, and look at the coach which was come to fetch her. "I beg pardon," she said, "for having given you the trouble to come up,

Digitized by Google

and am ſorry to make the ladies wait; but dreſſing, and ſome family buſineſs, made me forget to give my children their little meal, and they don't like to receive it from any body elſe." I muttered ſomething, I don't know what—my whole ſoul was taken up with her air, her voice, her manner; and before I could recover myſelf, ſhe ran into her room for her gloves and fan. Whilſt ſhe was gone, the little ones eyed me aſkance. I went up to the youngeſt, who has a moſt pleaſing countenance: he drew back, and Charlotte, juſt then coming in, ſaid, "Lewis, ſhake hands with your couſin." The little fellow

Digitized by Google

fellow held out his hand very readily, and I gave him a kiſs. "My couſin," ſaid I to the amiable Charlotte as I handed her down, "do you think I deſerve the happineſs of being related to you?" She archly replied, "Oh! I have ſuch a number of couſins, I ſhould be ſorry you were the moſt undeſerving of the whole ſet." When Charlotte took leave of them, ſhe deſired Sophy, who was the eldeſt of thoſe left at home, to take great care of the children, and to go to her papa when he returned from walking. She told the little ones to mind their ſiſter Sophy as much as if it was herſelf;

Digitized by Google

herſelf; and ſome promiſed faithfully that they would: but a little fair girl, of ſix years old, looked rather diſcontented, and ſaid, "but ſhe an't Charlotte though for all that, and, Charlotte, we love you beſt." During this time the two eldeſt boys had got up behind the coach, and at my requeſt ſhe gave them leave to go to the end of the wood, upon condition that they would ſit very ſtill and hold faſt.

We had but juſt ſeated ourſelves in the carriage, talked about the new faſhions and the little hats, and the company we were to meet at the ball, when Charlotte ſtopped the coach,

Digitized by Google

coach, and made her brothers get down. They would kiſs her hand again before they went: the eldeſt ſhewed all the tender attention of a boy of fifteen, and the youngeſt a great deal of warmth and affection. She deſired them again to give her love to the children; and we drove on.

The old lady aſked her if ſhe had read the book ſhe laſt ſent to her. "I cannot ſay I have," ſaid Charlotte, "and I will return it you. I confeſs I was not pleaſed with that, any more than with the firſt which you ſent me." Imagine my ſurpriſe, when having aſked the title, ſhe told me

Digitized by Google

me it was ——. Penetration and judgement appeared in every thing ſhe ſaid; each expreſſion ſeemed to light up her features with new charms and new rays of genius, which were unfolded by degrees as ſhe found herſelf underſtood.

"When I was very young," ſhe added, "I loved romances better than any thing in the world. Nothing could equal my delight, when I got into a corner on a holiday, and entered with my whole heart and ſoul into all the joy or ſorrow of a Miſs Jenny. I confeſs that ſort of reading has ſtill ſome charms for me; but as I don't read much, the books I do

Digitized by Google

I do read ſhould be ſuited to my taſte. I prefer the authors who don't carry me to ſcenes too far removed from my own ſituation in life, but where I may ſuppoſe myſelf and thoſe that are about me; and whoſe ſtories are intereſting, touching, like the life I lead in the boſom of my family; which, without being abſolutely paradiſe, is a continual ſource of ſatisfaction and delight." I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which theſe laſt words occaſioned; and it did not laſt long, for after ſhe had given her opinion of the Vicar of Wakefield, *&c. &c.* with equal juſtneſs and diſcernment,

Digitized by Google

I could hold no longer; and I began with great eagerneſs to tell her what were my own thoughts on the ſubjects. After ſome time, when Charlotte at length addreſſed herſelf to the other two ladies, I juſt perceived that they were ſtill in the coach. The old lady looked at me ſeveral times with an air of raillery, which however I did not at all mind.

We then talked of dancing. "If it is a fault to love dancing," ſaid ſhe, "I will freely own that I am extremely guilty; no amuſement is more agreeable to me. If any thing diſturbs me, I go to my harpſicord, play ſome of the lively airs I have

Digitized by Google

danced to, and all is forgotten." You know me, and will figure to yourſelf my countenance whilſt ſhe was ſpeaking—My looks ſtedfaſtly fixed upon her fine black eyes; my very ſoul attached to her's, and ſeizing her ideas ſo ſtrongly, that I hardly heard the words which expreſſed them. At length I got out of the coach like one that dreams; and I found myſelf in the aſſembly-room, without knowing how I came there.

They began with minuets. I took out one lady after another, and exactly thoſe who were the moſt diſagreeable could not bring themſelves

Digitized by Google

to leave off. Charlotte and her partner began an Engliſh country dance. Imagine my delight when they came to do the figure with us. You ſhould ſee Charlotte: ſhe ſeems to dance with all her heart and ſoul, and as if ſhe was born for nothing elſe; her figure is all elegance, lightneſs, and grace. I aſked her to dance the ſecond country dance with me; ſhe was engaged, but promiſed herſelf to me for the third; telling me at the ſame time, with the moſt agreeable freedom, that ſhe was very fond of allemandes. "It is the cuſtom here," ſaid ſhe, "for every couple to dance the allemandes together; but my

Digitized by Google

my partner will be delighted if I ſave him the trouble, for he does the walſe very ill; I obſerve the lady you dance with is in the ſame ſituation. I am ſure by your Engliſh country dances that you muſt do the walſe very well yourſelf, ſo that if it is agreeable to you to dance the allemandes with me, do you propoſe it to my partner; I will propoſe it to your's." We went to ſettle this affair; and it was agreed that during the allemandes, Charlotte's partner ſhould attend upon mine.

We began; and at firſt amuſed ourſelves with making every poſſible turn with our arms. How graceful

Digitized by Google

and animated all her motions! When the walſe commenced, all the couples, which were whirling round, at firſt joſtled againſt each other. We very judiciouſly kept aloof till the awkward and clumſy had withdrawn; when we joined in there were but two couples left. I never in my life was ſo active; I was more than mortal. To hold in my arms the moſt lovely of women, to fly with her like the wind, and loſe ſight of every other object!—But I own to you, I then determined, that the woman I loved, and to whom I had pretenſions, ſhould never do the

walſe

Digitized by Google

waltz with any other man.—You will understand this.

We took a few turns in the room to recover our breath; and then Charlotte sat down, and I brought her a few slices of lemon, all indeed that were left, which I stole from those who were making the negus: she eat some with sugar, and seemed to be refreshed by them; but I was obliged in politeness to offer them to the lady who sat next Charlotte, and she very injudiciously took some.

We were the second couple in the third country dance. As we were going down (and heaven knows with what extacy I looked at her arms,

Digitized by Google

and her eyes which bore the impreſſion of a natural and lively pleaſure) a lady of a certain age, whoſe agreeable countenance had ſtruck me at firſt ſight, looked at Charlotte, and ſmiled; then held up her finger in a threatning attitude, and in a very ſignificant tone of voice, ſaid "Albert! Albert!"

"Who is this Albert," ſaid I to Charlotte, "if it is not impertinent?" She was going to anſwer, when we were obliged to ſeparate for hands ſix round at bottom; and in croſſing over I thought I perceived that ſhe looked penſive. "Why ſhould I conceal it from you?" ſaid

Digitized by Google

ſaid ſhe, when ſhe gave me her hand to lead out of ſides; "Albert is a worthy man to whom I am engaged." I had been told this before by the ladies in the coach, but I had not then ſeen Charlotte; I did not know her value. I ſeemed to hear it for the firſt time. I was diſtreſſed, confuſed, wrong in the figure, and put every body out; and Charlotte, by puſhing one and pulling another, with great difficulty ſet us right again.

Whilſt we were dancing, the lightning, which had for ſome time been ſeen in the horizon, and which I had declared to be only ſum-

Digitized by Google

ſummer lightning, and proceeding entirely from heat, became much more violent, and the thunder was heard through all the noiſe of the fiddles. Three ladies run out of the ſet; their partners followed; the confuſion became general, and the muſic ſtopped. When any diſtreſs or terror comes upon us in a ſcene of amuſement, it has a ſtronger effect on our minds, either becauſe the contraſt makes us feel it more keenly; or rather, perhaps, becauſe our ſenſes being open to impreſſions of all kinds, the ſhock is more forcibly and quickly perceived. This circumſtance may account in

ſome

Digitized by Google

ſome meaſure for the extraordinary contortions and ſhrieks of the ladies. One of the moſt courageous ſat down with her back to the window and ſtopped her ears; another knelt down before her and hid her face in her lap; a third ſhoved herſelf between them, and embraced her little ſiſter, ſhedding at the ſame time a torrent of tears: ſome inſiſted upon going home; others ſtill more diſtreſſed did not attend to their indiſcreet partners, who were ſtealing from their lips thoſe ſighs that were addreſſed to heaven. Some of the gentlemen went down ſtairs to drink a bottle quietly; and the reſt of the com-

Digitized by Google

company very willingly followed the miſtreſs of the houſe, who had the good ſenſe to conduct us to a room darkened by cloſe window-ſhutters. As ſoon as we came into it, Charlotte drew the chairs round, made us ſit down in a ring, and was eager to begin ſome little play.

More than one of our belles drew up and looked prim, in hopes of ſome agreeable conſequences from the forfeits. "Let us play at counting," ſaid Charlotte. "Obſerve, I am to go from right to left; you are to count one after the other as you ſit, and count faſt: whoever ſtops or miſtakes is to have a box on the

Digitized by Google

the ear, and ſo on till we have counted to a thouſand." It was pleaſant to ſee her go round with her hand up. "One," ſays the firſt, "two," the ſecond, "three," the third, and ſo on, till Charlotte went faſter and faſter. One then miſtook; inſtantly a box on the ear: the next laughed inſtead of ſaying the following number—another box on the ear; and ſtill faſter and faſter. I had two for my ſhare; I fancied they were harder than the reſt, and was much delighted. A general confuſion and laughter put an end to the play, long before we got to a thouſand. The ſtorm ceaſed; the com-

Digitized by Google

company formed into little parties; Charlotte returned to the aſſembly-room, and I followed her. As we were going, ſhe ſaid, "The blows I inflicted made them forget their apprehenſions; I myſelf was as much afraid as any body, but by affecting courage to keep up the ſpirits of the company, I really loſt my fears." We went to the window; and ſtill heard the thunder at a diſtance; a ſoft rain watered the fields, and filled the air with the moſt delightful and refreſhing ſmells. Leaning upon her arm, Charlotte fixed her eyes on the country before us, then raiſed them to heaven, and

Digitized by Google

and then turned them upon me; they were wet: ſhe put her hand upon mine and ſaid, * "Klopſtock!" I was oppreſſed with the ſenſations I then felt; I ſunk under the weight of them; I bent down upon her hand, and wetted it with my tears; as I raiſed myſelf, I looked ſtedfaſtly in her face. Divine Klopſtock! why didſt thou not ſee thy apotheoſis in thoſe eyes? And thy name, ſo often profaned, why is it ever pronounced by any voice but Charlotte's?

* A celebrated German poet, author of the Meſſiah.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER XII.

June 19.

I Forget where I broke off my narration; I recollect nothing about it; all I know is, that it was two in the morning when I went to bed, and if I could have talked to you inſtead of writing to you, I ſhould certainly have kept you till day-light.

I believe I did not tell you what paſſed in our return from the ball, and to-day I have not time neither. There was a beautiful ſun-riſing; the whole country was refreſhed, and the

Digitized by Google

the rain fell drop by drop from the trees in the foreſt.

Our companions were aſleep: Charlotte aſked me if I did not wiſh to ſleep too? and deſired I would not make any ceremony on her account. Looking ſtedfaſtly at her, I anſwered, "As long as thoſe eyes continue open, I cannot cloſe mine." We both remained awake till we came to her door: the maid opened it ſoftly, and anſwered to Charlotte's enquiries, that every body was well, and ſtill in bed. I left her, promiſing to ſee her again in the courſe of the day. I kept my word; and ſince that time, ſun, moon, ſtars, may riſe;

Digitized by Google

and ſet as they will; I know not whether it is day or whether it is night; the whole world is now nothing to me.

LETTER XIII.

MY days are as happy as thoſe which are reſerved for the Elect; and whatever may be my fate hereafter, I will never ſay that I have not taſted happineſs, and the pureſt happineſs of life. You know Walheim; I am now entirely ſettled there: there I am but half a league from Charlotte; there I enjoy myſelf,

Digitized by Google

ſelf, and all the pleaſure that a mortal is capable of. When I choſe Walheim for the end of my walks, I little thought that all heaven was ſo near it. How many times, in my long rambles, have I ſeen this hunting-lodge, which now contains the object of all my vows, ſometimes from the top of the hill, ſometimes from the meadow on the oppoſite ſide of the river.

I have often reflected on the deſire men have to extend themſelves, and to make new diſcoveries; and upon that ſecret impulſe, which afterwards inclines them to return to their circle, to conform to the laws

Digitized by Google

of cuſtom, and to embarraſs themſelves no longer with what paſſes either to the right or to the left.

When I firſt came hither, and from the top of the hill contemplated the beauties of this vale, you cannot imagine how I was attracted by every thing I ſaw round me. The little wood oppoſite, how delightful to ſit under its ſhade! how fine the view from that point of rock! How agreeably might one wander in thoſe cloſe valleys, and amongſt thoſe broken hills! I went and came without having found what I wiſhed. Diſtance, my dear friend, is like futurity; a darkneſs is placed before

Digitized by Google

before us; and the perceptions of our mind are as obſcure as diſtant objects are to our ſight. We ardently wiſh for a warm and noble energy which might take poſſeſſion of our ſouls; we would ſacrifice our whole being to be filled with ſuch a ſentiment.

So the moſt determined traveller returns at length to his country, and finds in his own cottage, in the arms of his wife, in the ſociety of his children, and in the labour neceſſary to maintain them, all the happineſs which he ſought in vain in the vaſt deſerts of the world.

When I go to Walheim at ſun-riſe, gather my own peaſe, and ſit

Digitized by Google

in a corner to ſhell them, and read Homer; when I go into the little kitchen and make a ſoup of them, I figure to myſelf the illuſtrious lovers of Penelope killing and dreſſing their own meat. All deſcriptions of the patriarchal life give me the moſt calm and agreeable ideas; and now, thank Heaven, I can compare to it the life I lead myſelf. Happy it is for me that my heart is capable of feeling the ſame ſimple and innocent pleaſure, as the peaſant who ſees on his table the cabbage he has raiſed with his own hand; and who not only enjoys his meal, but remembers alſo, with delight, the

fine

Digitized by Google

fine morning in which he planted it, the ſoft evenings in which he watered it, and the pleaſure he had in ſeeing it grow and flouriſh.

LETTER XIV.

THE day before yeſterday the phyſician came from the town to make a viſit at the ſteward's. He found me upon the floor, playing with Charlotte's children; we were tickling one another, and romping, and making a great noiſe. The doctor is very formal and very ſolemn; adjuſts the plaits of his ruffles whilſt

Digitized by Google

he is discoursing with you, and draws his chitterling up to his chin. He thought this conduct of mine very much beneath the dignity of man: I perceived it by his countenance; but I nevertheless continued to rebuild the houses of cards which the children had blown down. He told every body when he went back, that the steward's children were spoilt enough before, but that now Werter entirely ruined them.

Nothing touches me more than children, my dear friend, when I consider them, and observe in the little beings the seeds of all those virtues and qualities which will one day be so necessary

Digitized by Google

ſary to them; when I ſee in the obſtinate, all the future firmneſs and conſtancy of a great and noble character; in the capricious, that levity and gaiety of temper which will make them lightly paſs over the dangers and ſorrows of life; and when I ſee them all openneſs and ſimplicity, then I call to mind the divine words of our teacher, "If you do not become like one of theſe—" And theſe children who are our equals, and whom we ought to look upon as our models, we treat them like ſubjects; they are to have no will of their own—Have we then none ourſelves? and whence comes

Digitized by Google

this excluſive right? Is it becauſe we are older and more experienced? Great God! from the height of thy glory thou beholdeſt great children and little children (there are no other) and thou haſt long ſince declared to which thou giveſt the preference! But it has alſo been long ſince declared, that they believe in him, and do not hear him; and their children are after their own image, &c.

Adieu, my dear friend: I will not bewilder myſelf upon this ſubject any longer.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER XV.

July 2.

CHarlotte will ſpend ſome time in the town: ſhe is with a very deſerving woman, who has been given over by her phyſicians, and who wiſhed to have Charlotte with her in her laſt moments. What conſolation ſhe is capable of giving to the ſick, I have myſelf experienced, for my heart is much diſeaſed. I went with her laſt week to ſee the vicar of S—; a ſmall village in the mountains, about a league from hence. We got there about four o'clock; Charlotte's little ſiſter went

Digitized by Google

went with us. When we came into the court, which is ſhaded by two fine walnut-trees, the good old man was ſitting upon his bench. At ſight of Charlotte, he forgot his old age and his oaken ſtick, and ventured to walk towards her. She ran to him, and made him ſit down again, ſat down by him, preſented a thouſand compliments to him from her father, and played with the youngeſt of his children, the amuſement of his old age, though it was rather dirty and diſagreeable. I wiſh you could have ſeen her attention to this good old man; I wiſh you could have heard her raiſing her voice

becauſe

Digitized by Google

becauſe he is a little deaf, and telling him of young and healthy people who had died when it leaſt could have been expected; commending the virtues of the Carelſtad waters, and approving his intention of going thither the next ſummer; and aſſuring him ſhe thought he looked better than he did the laſt time ſhe ſaw him. During this time I paid my compliments and talked to his wife. The old man ſeemed quite in ſpirits, and as I could not help admiring the beauty of his walnut-trees, which formed ſuch an agreeable ſhade over our heads, he began to give us the hiſtory of them: "As to the oldeſt,"

ſaid

Digitized by Google

ſaid he, "we don't know who planted it; ſome ſay one clergyman, and ſome ſay another: as to the youngeſt, it is exactly the age of my wife; it will be fifty years old next October; her father planted it in the morning, and towards evening ſhe came into the world. My wife's father was my predeceſſor here, and I cannot expreſs to you how fond he was of this tree; it is certainly not leſs dear to me. Upon a log of wood, under this ſame tree, my wife was ſitting and knitting when I came into this court the firſt time, five and twenty years ago." Charlotte enquired after his daughter: he

Digitized by Google

he ſaid ſhe was gone with Mr. Smith into the meadows to ſee the hay-making. He then reſumed his hiſtory, and told us how he got into the good graces of his predeceſſor, and of his daughter; how he became firſt his curate and then his ſucceſſor; and he had ſcarcely finiſhed his ſtory, when his daughter returned with Mr. S. and affectionately ſaluted Charlotte. She has a clear brown complexion, is well made, lively, and a ſenſible worthy man might paſs his time very happily with her in the country. Her lover, for ſuch Mr. Smith immediately appeared to be, has an agreeable perſon, but

Digitized by Google

was very reſerved, and would not join in the converſation notwithſtanding all the endeavours of Charlotte for that purpoſe. I was uneaſy at it, becauſe I perceived by his countenance that it was not for want of talents, but from caprice and ill-humour. It was but too evident afterwards, when we went to take a walk; for whilſt I was talking and laughing with the vicar's daughter, the countenance of this gentleman, which before was none of the pleaſanteſt, became ſo dark and angry, that Charlotte pulled me by the ſleeve to make me deſiſt. Nothing concerns me more than to

ſee

Digitized by Google

ſee men torment one another; particularly when in the flower of their age, in the very ſearch of pleaſure, they waſte their few ſhort days of ſun-ſhine in quarrels and diſputes, and only feel their error when it is too late to repair it. This dwelt upon my mind; and during our collation, the converſation turning upon the happineſs and miſery of this life, I could not help taking that opportunity to inveigh bitterly againſt ill-humour. "We are apt," ſaid I, "to complain that we have but few happy days; and it appears to me that we have very little right to complain. If our hearts were

Digitized by Google

always in a proper diſpoſition to receive the good things which Heaven ſends us, we ſhould acquire ſtrength to ſupport the evil when they came upon us." "But," ſays the vicar's wife, "we cannot always command our tempers; ſo much depends on the conſtitution; when the body is ill at eaſe, the mind is ſo likewiſe." "Well, let us look upon this diſpoſition as a diſeaſe," I anſwered, "and ſee if there is no remedy for it." "That is more to the purpoſe," ſaid Charlotte; "and I think, indeed, a great deal might be done in this reſpect. I know, for example, that when any thing diſturbs

Digitized by Google

turbs my temper, I go into the garden, I ſing a lively air, and it vaniſhes." "That is what I meant," I replied; "ill-humour may be compared to ſloth. It is natural to man to be indolent; but if once we get the better of our indolence, we then go on with alacrity, and find a real pleaſure in being active." The daughter liſtened to me with attention. The young man objected that we were not maſters of ourſelves, and ſtill leſs of our feelings. I told him that it was a diſagreeable ſenſation which was in queſtion, and one that every body wiſhed to get rid of; that we don't know how far

Digitized by Google

our ſtrength will go, till we have tried it; that the ſick conſult phyſicians, and ſubmit to the moſt ſcrupulous regimen, and the moſt nauſeous medicines, to recover their health. I then perceived that the good old man inclined his head to liſten to our diſcourſe. I therefore raiſed my voice, and addreſſing myſelf to him, ſaid; "There has been a great deal of preaching againſt all crimes, Sir; but I don't know that any body has hitherto preached againſt the ſpleen." "It is for thoſe who preach in towns," ſaid he, "to diſcourſe on that ſubject, for peaſants don't know what the ſpleen is; though indeed it

Digitized by Google

would not be amiſs to do it here from time to time, if it was only for my wife and the ſteward." We all laughed, and ſo did he very heartily; but it gave him a fit of coughing, which interrupted us for ſome time. Mr. Smith reſumed the ſubject. "You have made this indiſpoſition of temper a crime," ſaid he; "that appears to me to be carrying the matter too far." "It is not, though," I anſwered, "if what is pernicious to ourſelves, and to others, deſerves the name of crime. Is it not enough that we are without the power to make one another happy, but muſt we deprive each other

Digitized by Google

of that ſatisfaction, which, left to ourſelves, we might often be capable of enjoying. Shew me the man who has ill-humour, and who hides it; who bears the whole burthen of it himſelf without interrupting the pleaſures of thoſe about him! No; ill-humour ariſes from a conſciouſneſs of our own want of merit; from a diſcontent which always accompanies that envy which fooliſh vanity engenders. We diſlike to ſee people happy, unleſs their happineſs is the work of our own hands." Charlotte looked at me, and ſmiled at the heat with which I ſpoke; and ſome tears which I perceived in the eyes

Digitized by Google

of the young woman, inclined me to continue. "Woe unto thoſe," I ſaid, "who make uſe of their power over a human heart, to deprive it of the ſimple pleaſure it would naturally enjoy. All the favours, all the attention in the world, cannot for a moment make amends for the loſs of that happineſs which a cruel tyranny deſtroys."

My heart was full; ſome recollections preſſed upon my mind, and my eyes were filled with tears.

"We ſhould ſay to ourſelves every day," I exclaimed, "what good can I do to my friends? I can only endeavour not to interrupt

Digitized by Google

them in their pleaſures, and try to augment the happineſs which I myſelf partake of. When their ſouls are tormented by a violent paſſion, when their hearts are rent with grief, I cannot give them relief for a moment.

"And, when at length a fatal malady ſeizes the unhappy being, whoſe untimely grave was prepared by thy hand—when ſtretched out and exhauſted, he raiſes his dim eyes to heaven, and the damps of death are on his brow—then thou ſtandeſt before him like a condemned criminal; thou ſeeſt thy fault, but 'tis too late; thou feeleſt thy want of power; thou feeleſt, with bitterneſs, that all thou

Digitized by Google

thou canſt give, all thou canſt do, will not reſtore the ſtrength of thy unfortunate victim, nor procure for him a moment of conſolation!"

In pronouncing theſe words, the remembrance of a like ſcene, at which I had been preſent, came with all its weight upon my heart. I put my handkerchief to my eyes, I got up and left the company. The voice of Charlotte, who called me to go home, made me recollect myſelf; and in our way back, with what tenderneſs ſhe chid me! how kindly ſhe repreſented to me, that the too eager intereſt, and the heat with which I entered into every thing, would

Digitized by Google

would wear me out, and ſhorten my days!—Yes, my angel, I will take care of myſelf; I will live for you.

LETTER XVI.

July 6.

CHarlotte is ſtill with her dying friend; and is ſtill the ſame, ſtill the ſame kind attentive creature, who ſoftens pain, and gives happineſs whichever way ſhe turns. She went out yeſterday with her little ſiſters; I knew it, and went to meet her, and we walked together. In coming back towards the town, we ſtopped at the ſpring I am ſo fond of,

Digitized by Google

of, and which is become a thouſand times dearer to me now that Charlotte has ſat by the ſide of it. I looked around me, and recalled the time I had paſſed there, when my heart was unoccupied and alone. "Dear ſpring," ſaid I, "I have not ſince that time enjoyed cool repoſe by your freſh ſtream; and often paſſing haſtily by, I have not even ſeen you." I fixed my eyes upon Charlotte, and was ſtruck with a lively ſenſe of all that I poſſeſs in her.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER XVII.

July 8.

HOW can I be ſo childiſh? I depend on every turn and change of countenance. How can I be ſo childiſh?—We have been at Walheim: the ladies went in a carriage, but got out to walk. Whilſt we were walking, I thought the eyes of Charlotte—but I was miſtaken—However I will tell you in two words, for I am now dying with ſleep. When the ladies got into their coach again, young W. Selftadt, Andran, and myſelf, were talking to them at the window; the young

Digitized by Google

young men were gay and full of ſpirits. I watched Charlotte's eyes; they wandered from one to the other, but did not light on me; upon me, who ſtood there motionleſs, and who ſaw nothing but her. My heart was bidding her adieu a thouſand and a thouſand times, and ſhe did not even look at me. The coach drove off, and a tear was ready to ſtart. I followed her with my eyes; I ſaw her put her head out of the window. Alas! was it for me that ſhe looked out? I know not; and uncertainty is my comfort perhaps. — Good night. — I ſee my own weakneſs.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER XVIII.

July 10.

YOU ſhould ſee how fooliſh I look in company when her name is mentioned, when any body talks of her, particularly when they aſk me how I like her?—How I *like* her! I deteſt the phraſe. What muſt the man be who *liked* Charlotte, whoſe heart and ſenſes were not totally captivated by her?—How I *like* her!—A little while ago, I was aſked how I *liked* Oſſian?

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER. XIX.

July 13.

NO, I am not miſtaken—I read in her eyes that ſhe is intereſted for me; I feel it. And I may believe my own heart, which tells me that ſhe—dare I ſay it?—Can I pronounce the divine words? — She loves me.

That ſhe loves me! Oh! how the idea exalts me in my own eyes! How—I may tell you, for you are capable of underſtanding it—How I honour myſelf ſince I have been beloved by her! Is it preſumption, or is it a conſciouſneſs of the truth?

I do

Digitized by Google

I do not know a man who is capable of ſupplanting me in the heart of Charlotte:—And yet when ſhe ſpeaks of Albert with warmth, with tenderneſs, I feel like an ambitious courtier, who is deprived of his honours and his titles; or the ſoldier whoſe ſword is taken from him by his prince.

LETTER XX.

July 16.

HOW my heart beats, and my blood boils in my veins, when by accident I touch her finger!—when my feet meet her's under the table, I draw

Digitized by Google

I draw them back with precipitation as from a furnace; but a ſecret power again preſſes me forward, and diſorders all my ſenſes.

Her innocent and eaſy heart does not know, that all theſe little marks of confidence and friendſhip make my torment. When ſhe puts her hand upon my mine, when in the eagerneſs of converſation ſhe comes cloſe to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips, the ſudden effect of lightning is not ſtronger. Ah! this celeſtial confidence, if ever I ſhould dare — you underſtand me, my dear friend; my heart is not ſo corrupt: it is weak, very weak;

Digitized by Google

and is not that a degree of corruption?

I look upon her as ſacred, and in her preſence I deſire nothing: when I am near her I am all ſoul. There is a favorite air of hers, which ſhe plays on the harpſichord with the energy of an angel: it is ſtriking, touching, and yet ſimple. As ſoon as ſhe begins it, care, ſorrow, pain, all is forgotten. I believe I perfectly comprehend all that is related of the magic of ancient muſic. At times when I am ready to ſhoot myſelf, ſhe plays that air, and the darkneſs which hung over me is diſperſed, and I breathe freely again.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXI.

July 18.

WHAT is the whole world to our hearts without love? it is the optic machine of the Savoyards without light. As ſoon as the little lamp appears, the figures ſhine on the whitened wall; and if love only ſhews us ſhadows which paſs away, yet ſtill we are happy when, like children, we are tranſported with the ſplendid phantoms.

I ſhall not ſee Charlotte to-day; company, which I could not avoid, hinders me. What do you think I have done? I ſent the little boy who

Digitized by Google

waits upon me, that I might at leaſt ſee ſomebody that had been near her. With what impatience I waited for his return, and with what pleaſure I ſaw him! I ſhould certainly have taken him in my arms if I had not been aſhamed.

The Bologna ſtone, when placed in the ſun, attracts the rays, and retains them ſo as to give light a conſiderable time after it is removed into the dark. The boy was juſt this to me. The idea that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on his features, the buttons of his coat, the cape, made all of them ſo intereſting, ſo dear to me—I would not at that moment

Digitized by Google

moment have taken a thouſand crowns for him, I was ſo happy to ſee him!—Beware of laughing at me, my good friend: nothing which makes us happy is an illuſion.

LETTER XXII.

July 19.

AS ſoon as I opened my window this morning, I ſaid, "To-day I ſhall ſee her," and I calmly looked at the ſun. I ſhall ſee her, and I have no other wiſh to form for the whole day: all, all is included in that thought.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXIII.

July 20.

I Cannot yet approve the ſcheme you have of ſending me to the ambaſſador of —— at ——. I don't love ſubordination, and we all know too that he is a hard diſagreeable man to have any connection with. You ſay my mother wiſhes to have me employed. I could not help laughing at that.—Am I not employed enough? and if it is in ſhelling peaſe and beans, it is in fact the ſame. In this world, all is miſery; and thoſe who in compliance with others are endeavouring to acquire riches

Digitized by Google

riches or honours, are in my opinion madmen.

LETTER XXIV.

July 24.

SINCE you are ſo much intereſted about my progreſs in drawing, I am ſorry to tell you, that I have hitherto done very little in that way. I never was in a happier diſpoſition; I never underſtood Nature better; I never was more ſenſible of the ſublime parts of it, nor entered more minutely into its details; and yet I don't know how to expreſs the ſtate in which I

Digitized by Google

am: my executive powers fail me; every thing ſwims and dances before me, and I cannot make an outline. I think I ſhould ſucceed better in relief, if I was to uſe clay or wax: I ſhall try, if this laſts any longer. Three times I have begun Charlotte's picture, and three times have diſhonoured my pencil. I don't know how it is; not long ago I was very happy in taking likeneſſes: I have made a ſhadow of her, and I muſt content myſelf with that.

LET-

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXV.

July 27.

I HAVE very often reſolved not to ſee her ſo often. It is more eaſy to talk than to act. Every day I yield to the temptation; and when I return at night, I ſay I won't go on the morrow; but on the morrow I find myſelf with her again, and don't know how it has happened. Don't imagine, however, that good reaſons are always wanting. One evening ſhe ſaid, "You'll come again to-morrow:" I could not then avoid going. Another day, the weather is ſo fine I muſt walk.—I walk

Digitized by Google

walk to Walheim; when I am there, it it but half a league farther. My grandmother uſed to tell us a ſtory of a mountain of load-ſtone: When any veſſels came near it, the nails flew to the mountain, and the unhappy crew periſhed amidſt the diſjointed planks.

LETTER XXVI.

ALBERT is arrived. Were he the beſt and the moſt perfect of men, were I in every reſpect his inferior, it would not be leſs inſupportable to me to ſee him in poſſeſſion of ſo many charms, ſo many

Digitized by Google

many perfections. I have ſeen him, my dear friend; I have ſeen this happy huſband: he is a well-bred worthy man, whom one cannot help liking. Happily for me I was not at the firſt meeting; my heart would have been torn to pieces; and he has been ſo kind as not to give Charlotte a ſingle kiſs before me. Heaven reward him for it! The eſteem he has for this charming girl muſt make me love him. He ſhews a regard for me; I am certainly indebted to Charlotte for it. Women always endeavour to keep up a good underſtanding between their friends: it don't often ſucceed; when it does, they

Digitized by Google

they only are the gainers by it. Seriouſly I cannot help eſteeming Albert. The coolneſs and calmneſs of his temper form a ſtriking contraſt with the impetuoſity of mine; and yet he has a great deal of feeling, and knows the value of that happineſs which he poſſeſſes. He ſeems very little ſubject to ill-humour; which, you know, of all faults is the one I am leaſt inclined to excuſe.

He looks upon me as a man of underſtanding and taſte. My attachment to Charlotte, the lively intereſt I ſhew for every thing that relates to her, augment his triumph and his love. I will not enquire whether

Digitized by Google

whether he may not in private ſometimes teaze her with little jealouſies: in his place, at leaſt, I know I ſhould not be quite eaſy. Be that as it will, the pleaſure I enjoyed with Charlotte is at an end. Shall I call it folly or blindneſs?—But it wants no name—the thing ſpeaks itſelf. Before Albert came, I knew all that I now know; I knew I could have no pretenſions to her, and I did not claim any; and now here I am, like an idiot, ſtaring with aſtoniſhment, becauſe another comes and takes her from me. I gnaſh my teeth, I bite my lips, I hate and deſpiſe myſelf: but I ſhould

deſpiſe

Digitized by Google

deſpiſe the man ſtill more, who could tell me coldly, that I muſt reconcile myſelf to it, for it could not be otherwiſe. Let me eſcape from all ſuch ſilly perſonages.— Yeſterday, after having rambled a long time in the woods, I returned to Charlotte's houſe. I found her ſitting with Albert under an arbour. Not knowing what to do, I played the fool, and was guilty of a thouſand extravagancies. "For heaven's ſake," ſaid Charlotte to-day, "let me beg of you that we may have no more ſcenes like that of laſt night; you are quite alarming in your violent ſpirits." Between

Digitized by Google

ourſelves, I have taken to watch Albert; and when he is engaged I run there, and am always pleaſed when I find her alone.

LETTER XXVII.

Auguſt 8.

BELIEVE me, my dear friend, when I talked of the people who might adviſe me to reconcile myſelf to this event, and ſaid "Away with ſuch adviſers!" I was very far from thinking you could poſſibly be one of them: but, in fact, you are in the right. I will only make one objection. Of two oppoſite methods which

Digitized by Google

which are propoſed, one ſeldom takes either. There are as many various lines of conduct and opinion, as there are turns of feature between an aquiline noſe and a flat one.

Give me leave then to grant all your concluſions, and contrive a middle way for myſelf, to ſlip between them.

You ſay to me, that I either have hopes of obtaining Charlotte, or that I have not. In the firſt caſe, I ought to follow my point, and preſs forward to the accompliſhment of my wiſhes: In the ſecond caſe, you tell me to act as a man, and throw aſide

Digitized by Google

aſide the unfortunate affection which will conſume all my ſtrength. This is very juſtly ſaid, my dear friend, and very eaſy too to ſay.

Would you require of a feeble man, oppreſſed by a low and languid diſeaſe, which is wearing out his conſtitution by degrees, that he ſhould put an end to his miſeries by a piſtol or a dagger? Does not the ſame diſeaſe, which is conſuming his life, at the ſame time deprive him of the reſolution to put an end to it?

You might, in return, ſend me a ſimile of the ſame kind. — Who would not have an arm cut off, rather than riſk his life by deferring

Digitized by Google

the operation? Perhaps many would. —But let us leave theſe compariſons.

There are times in which I have reſolution, and ſhould perhaps go away, if I knew where to go.

LETTER XXVIII.

Auguſt 10.

IF I were not deprived of all underſtanding, I might lead the happieſt life in the world here; ſo many agreeable circumſtances, and of a kind to make a worthy man happy, are ſeldom united. Alas! I feel it but too ſenſibly! happineſs depends ſolely

Digitized by Google

ſolely on the mind! To be conſidered as making part of the moſt amiable family in the world, to be beloved by the father as a ſon, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte—and this worthy Albert, who does not interrupt my happineſs by any ſtroke of ill-humour, who ſalutes me cordially, and prefers me to every thing but Charlotte! My dear friend, you would like to hear us, when we walk together and talk of Charlotte. In fact, nothing can be more ridiculous than our connection, and yet I am frequently ſoftened even to tears. When he talks to me of Charlotte's moſt reſpecta-

Digitized by Google

ble mother; when he deſcribes to me her laſt moments, and the affecting ſcene in which ſhe gave up to her daughter the care of her children and family; when he tells me how Charlotte immediately aſſumed another character; what a ſkilful œconomiſt, and an active houſewife ſhe became, and what a tender mother; every day diſplaying all theſe qualities, and yet preſerving her agreeable chearfulneſs and vivacity; I walk by the ſide of him, pick up flowers by the way, with great attention make a noſegay, and—throw it into the firſt brook I come to, and watch it

Digitized by Google

it as it glides gently down. I don't recollect whether I told you that Albert is to ſettle here. He is much eſteemed at court, and has obtained a place which brings him in a good income. I have ſeen few men ſo punctual and methodical in buſineſs.

LETTER XXIX.

Auguſt 12.

ALBERT is certainly one of the beſt men in the world. I had a very ſingular converſation with him yeſterday, which I muſt relate to you. I went to take leave of him; for I took it into my head to

Digitized by Google

ſpend a few days in the mountains, from whence I now write to you. As I was walking up and down his room, I obſerved his piſtols. I aſked him to lend them to me for my journey. "They are at your ſervice," ſaid he, "if you will take the trouble of loading them, for I only keep them there for form." I took one up, and he continued: "Ever ſince I had like to have ſuffered for my precaution I have left off keeping loaded fire-arms." I deſired him to tell me what the accident was. "I was with a friend in the country," he ſaid; "my piſtols were not loaded, and I ſlept

Digitized by Google

with perfect tranquility: but one rainy afternoon, when I was ſitting and doing nothing, it came into my head, I don't know how, that the houſe might be attacked, and that theſe piſtols might be of uſe, and that we might—in ſhort, you know how one goes on when one has nothing better to do. I gave my piſtols to my ſervant to clean and load. He was playing with the maid and trying to frighten her; and, God knows how, the piſtol went off: the rammer was in; it went againſt the girl's hand, and tore off her thumb. You may imagine the lamentations and noiſe we had; and

Digitized by Google

moreover a ſurgeon's bill to pay. Since that accident my piſtols have remained as you ſee them." What, indeed, is the uſe of precaution? we cannot, my dear friend, foreſee the dangers which threaten us. Do you know, I like every thing in this man, except his *indeeds*; and every rule has an exception. But he is ſo correct in his behaviour, of ſuch perfect veracity, that if he thinks he has riſked any thing, or been too general, or not ſtrictly true, he never ceaſes to moderate, and qualify, and extenuate, till at length it appears that he has ſaid nothing at all. Albert now, according to cuſtom,

was

Digitized by Google

was immerſed in his text: I ceaſed to hear him, and was loſt in reveries. In theſe reveries, I put the mouth of the piſtol to my forehead. "What do you mean?" cried Albert, turning back the piſtol. "It is not charged," ſaid I. "And if it is not," he anſwered with impatience, "what do you mean by it? I cannot comprehend how a man ſhould be ſo mad as to blow out his brains; and the bare idea of it ſhocks me." "What right has any man," ſaid I, "in ſpeaking of an action, immediately to pronounce that it is mad, or wiſe, or good, or bad? What is meant by all this? Have you carefully

Digitized by Google

fully examined the interior motives for the action? Have you fairly unfolded all the reasons which gave rise to it, and which made it necessary? If you did all this you would not be so quick with your decision." "However," said Albert, "you will allow that some actions are criminal, whatever were the motives for committing them."—I granted it, and shrugged up my shoulders.

"But still, my good friend," I said, "there are more exceptions to make. Theft is a crime: but the man who is driven to it by extreme poverty, with no design but to save himself and his family from perish-

ing

Digitized by Google

ing for want, muſt he too be pu-niſhed? and is he not rather an ob-ject of our compaſſion? Who ſhall throw the firſt ſtone at a huſband that, in the firſt heat of juſt reſent-ment, ſacrifices a faithleſs wife, and her perfidious ſeducer? or at a young girl whom love only has led aſtray? Even our laws, our pedantic laws, our cold cruel laws, relent and withdraw their puniſhment."

"Theſe examples are very dif-ferent," ſaid Albert; "becauſe a man, under the influence of violent paſſion, is incapable of reflection, and is looked upon as drunk, or out of his ſenſes." "Oh! you people

of

Digitized by Google

of ſound underſtandings," I replied, ſmiling, " are very ready to pronounce ſentence, and talk of extravagance, and madneſs, and intoxication; you are quiet, and care for nothing; you avoid the drunken man, and deteſt the extravagant; you paſs on the other ſide like the Prieſt, and like the Phariſee you thank God that you are not like one of them. I have more than once experienced the effects of drinking; my paſſions have always bordered upon extravagance, and I am not aſhamed to own it. Do I not find that thoſe ſuperior men, who have done any great or extraordinary

Digitized by Google

dinary action, have in all times been treated as if they were intoxicated or mad?

"And in private life too, is it not insufferable, that if a young man does any thing uncommonly noble or generous, the world immediately says he is out of his senses? Take shame to yourselves, ye people of discretion; take shame to yourselves, ye sages of the earth."—"This now is one of your extravagant flights," said Albert; "you always go beyond the mark: and here you are most undoubtedly wrong, to compare suicide, which is in question, with great actions; for it can only be

Digitized by Google

be looked upon as a weakneſs. It it much eaſier to die than to bear a life of miſery with fortitude."

I was upon the point of breaking off the converſation immediately; for nothing puts me out of all patience, like a common-place opinion, which means nothing, whilſt I am talking from my inmoſt heart. However I got the better of myſelf; for having often heard this pitiful argument, I now begin to be uſed to it. But I anſwered with ſome warmth, "You call this a weakneſs; beware of being carried away by ſounds! Suppoſe a people groaning under the yoke of tyranny; do you

Digitized by Google

you call them weak, when at length they throw it off and break their chains? The man who, to reſcue his houſe from the flames, exerts all his powers, lifts burthens with eaſe that he could ſcarcely move when his mind was at peace; he who attacks and puts to flight half a ſcore of his enemies; are theſe weak people? My good friend, if reſiſtance is a mark of ſtrength, can the higheſt degree of reſiſtance be called a weakneſs?" Albert looked ſtedfaſtly at me, and ſaid, "Begging your pardon, I don't think the examples you have brought have any relation to the ſubject in queſtion."

Digitized by Google

tion." "That may very likely be," I answered, "for I have been often told that my way of combining things appeared extravagant. But let us try to set the matter in another light; let us examine what is the situation of a man who resolves to free himself from the burthen of life—a burthen that is in general so much desired—and let us enter into his feelings; for we cannot otherwise reason fairly on the subject.

"Human nature," I continued, has certain limits; there is a degree of joy, grief, pain, which it is able to endure, and beyond that degree it is annihilated.

Digitized by Google

"We are not, therefore, to enquire whether a man is weak or ſtrong, but whether he can paſs the bounds of nature, and the meaſure of his ſufferings, either of mind or body; and I think it is as abſurd to ſay that a man who deſtroys himſelf is a coward, as to call a man a coward who dies of a malignant fever." "Paradox, all paradox!" exclaimed Albert. "Not ſo paradoxical as you imagine," I replied; "you will allow that we call a diſeaſe mortal, in which nature is ſo ſeverely attacked, and her ſtrength ſo far exhauſted, that what remains is not ſufficient to raiſe her up and ſet her going again.

Digitized by Google

"Let us apply this to the mind; let us ſee how ideas work, and how impreſſions fix upon it, till at length a violent paſſion takes entire poſſeſſion, deſtroys all the powers it poſſeſſed when at eaſe, and entirely ſubdues it.

"It is in vain that a man of ſound underſtanding and cool temper ſees the miſerable ſituation of a wretch in ſuch circumſtances; it is in vain that he counſels him: 'tis like the man in health, who ſits by the bed of his dying friend, but is unable to communicate to him the ſmalleſt portion of his ſtrength."

Albert thought this too general. I quoted the girl who lately

Digitized by Google

drowned herſelf, and made him recollect her ſtory—" A good young creature, ſo accuſtomed to the narrow ſphere of domeſtic labour, and the buſineſs of the week, that ſhe knew of no pleaſure but taking a walk in the fields on a Sunday, dancing once perhaps in the holidays, and the reſt of her time only talking with her next neighbour of the news and little quarrels of the village. At length her heart feels new and unknown wiſhes; all that uſed to pleaſe her, now by degrees becomes taſteleſs, till ſhe meets with a man to whom a new affection inviſibly attaches her; from that time,

Digitized by Google

her hopes are all centered in him; the whole ſurrounding world is forgotten by her; ſhe ſees, hears, deſires nothing but him; he alone occupies all her thoughts. Her heart having never felt the baneful pleaſure ariſing from light vanity, her wiſhes tend immediately to the object of them; ſhe hopes to belong to him, and in eternal bonds expects to enjoy all the deſires of her heart, and to realize the ideas of happineſs which ſhe has formed. His repeated promiſes confirm her hopes; his fondneſs encreaſes her paſſion; her whole ſoul is loſt and drowned in pleaſure; her heart is all rapture:

At

Digitized by Google

At length ſhe ſtretches out her arms to embrace the object of her vows —All is vaniſhed away; her lover forſakes her.—Amazed! petrified! ſhe ſtands ſenſeleſs before the abyſs of miſery; ſhe ſees before her all around is darkneſs; for her there is no proſpect, nor hope, nor conſolation: ſhe is forſaken by him in whom her life was bound up; and in the wide univerſe which is before her, and amongſt ſo many who might repair her loſs, ſhe feels alone and abandoned by the whole world. Thus blinded, thus impelled, by the piercing grief which wrings her heart, ſhe plunges into the deep to

Digitized by Google

put an end to her torments. Such, Albert, is the hiſtory of many men: And is it not a parallel caſe with illneſs? Nature has no way to eſcape: her powers exhauſted, and contending powers to ſtruggle with, death muſt be the conſequence. Woe unto the man who could hear this ſituation deſcribed, and who could ſay, "A fooliſh girl! why did not ſhe wait till time had worn off the impreſſion? her deſpair would have been ſoftened, and ſhe would have found another lover to comfort her." One might as well ſay, "A fool! he died of a fever: why did not he wait till he had recovered his ſtrength,

Digitized by Google

ſtrength, till his blood was calm? then all would have been well, and he would have been alive now."

Albert, who did not allow the compariſon to be juſt, made many objections: amongſt the reſt, that I had only brought the example of a ſimple and ignorant girl;—but he could not comprehend how a man of ſenſe, whoſe views are more enlarged, and who ſees ſuch various conſolations, ſhould ever ſuffer himſelf to fall into ſuch a ſtate of deſpair. "My good friend," ſaid I, "whatever is the education of a man, whatever is his underſtanding, ſtill he is a man, and the little rea-

Digitized by Google

ſon that he poſſeſſes, either does not act at all, or acts very feebly when the paſſions are let looſe, or rather when the boundaries of human nature cloſe in upon him — But we will talk of this another time," I ſaid, and took up my hat—Alas! my heart was full—and we parted without conviction on either ſide. —How rarely do men underſtand one another!

LETTER

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXX.

August 15.

IT is moſt certain that what renders one man neceſſary to another, is a ſimilarity of taſte and ſentiment. I ſee that Charlotte would not loſe me without regret; and as to the children, they every day aſk me to come again on the morrow. I went this afternoon to tune Charlotte's harpſicord: but I could not contrive to do it; all the children came about me, and aſked me to tell them a ſtory. Charlotte was deſirous that I ſhould pleaſe them, and I told my very beſt tale of the prince that

Digitized by Google

that was ſerved by dwarfs. I improve by this exerciſe myſelf, I aſſure you, and am quite ſurpriſed at the impreſſion theſe ſtories make upon the children. If I invent an incident at any time, and afterwards omit it, the little arch rogues never fail to tell me, it was not ſo the firſt time; ſo that I now endeavour to relate with great exactneſs, and without any pauſes, and in a tone of voice that is almoſt recitative. I ſee by this how much an author hurts his works by altering them even for the better. The firſt impreſſion is readily received. A man will believe the incredible, it will be

Digitized by Google

be engraved on his memory; and woe unto thoſe who would afterwards endeavour to efface it!

LETTER XXXI.

WHAT conſtitutes the happineſs of man, muſt it then change and become the ſource of his miſery? That ardent ſentiment which animated my heart with the love of nature, which poured in upon me a torrent of delight, which brought all paradiſe before me, is now become an inſupportable torment, a demon which purſues and har-

Digitized by Google

harraſſes me inceſſantly. In times paſt I contemplated from the top of high rocks, the broad river which, far as eye can reach, waters this fertile plain. Every thing put forth and grew, and was expanded. Around me all was in motion. I ſaw theſe mountains covered to their ſummits with high and tufted trees, and the vallies in their various windings ſheltered by ſmiling woods; the peaceful ſtream gently glided through the trembling reeds, and in its calm ſurface reflected the light clouds, which a ſoft zephyr kept ſuſpended in the air. I heard the birds animating the woods with their

Digitized by Google

their ſong. Millions of inſects danced in the purple rays of the ſun. The arid rock afforded nouriſhment to the moſs; and the ſands below were covered with broom. The vivifying heat which animates all nature, was every where diſplayed before my eyes; it filled and warmed my heart. I was loſt in the idea of infinity. Stupendous mountains encompaſſed me; precipices were before my feet; torrents fell by the ſide of me; impetuous rivers ran through the plain; rocks and mountains reſounded from afar; and in the depths of the earth I ſaw innumerable powers in motion, and mul-

Digitized by Google

multiplying to infinity. All the beings of the creation, of a thouſand tribes and a thouſand forms, move upon the earth and in the air; and man hides himſelf in his little hut, and ſays, "I am lord over this vaſt univerſe." Weak mortal! all things appear little to you, for you are little yourſelf. Craggy mountains, deſerts untrodden by the foot of man, even the unknown confines of the immenſe ocean, are animated by the breath of the Eternal, and every atom to which he has given exiſtence and life, finds favour in his ſight. Ah! how often at that time has the flight of a ſea-bird

which

Digitized by Google

which paſſed over my head, inſpired me with the deſire of being tranſported to the ſhore of the immeaſurable waters, there to drink the pleaſures of life as in a river, and to partake, if but for a moment, and with the confined powers of my ſoul, of the beatitude of the Creator, in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

My dear friend, the bare recollection of theſe times ſtill gives me pleaſure: the vehemence of mind with which I recall the ſenſations, which gives me faculties to expreſs them, raiſes me above myſelf, and makes

Digitized by Google

makes me doubly feel my preſent anguiſh.

The curtain drops, the ſcene is changed; inſtead of proſpects of eternal life, a bottomleſs pit is for ever opened before me. Can we ſay of any thing, that it exiſts, when all paſſes away, when time in its rapid progreſs carries every thing with it, and our tranſitory exiſtence, hurried along by the torrent, is either ſwallowed up by the waves or daſhed againſt the rocks? There is not a moment which does not prey upon me, and all around me; and every moment I am myſelf a deſtroyer. The moſt innocent walk deprives

of

Digitized by Google

of life thouſands of poor inſects; one ſtep deſtroys the fabric of the induſtrious ant, and turns a little world into a chaos! No, 'tis not the great and uncommon calamities of the world, the floods which ſweep away whole villages, the earthquakes that ſwallow up our towns, which touch and affect me. What ſaps my heart, is that deſtroying, hidden power, which exiſts in every thing. Nature has formed nothing which does not conſume itſelf, and every thing that is near it: ſo that ſurrounded by earth and air, and by all the active powers, I wander with an aching heart; and the univerſe

Digitized by Google

to me is as a fearful monſter, which devours and regorges its food.

LETTER XXXII.

August 20.

IT is in vain that I ſtretch out my arms towards her, when I wake in the morning after the ill-omened viſions of the night; 'tis in vain that I ſeek her, when an innocent dream has happily deceived me, and placed me by her ſide in the fields; I held her hand, I covered it with kiſſes: Alas! when half aſleep, I ſtill think I touch her, and then I wake entirely — torrents of

tears

Digitized by Google

tears flow from my oppreſſed heart! and bereaved of all comfort, I weep over the woes to come.

LETTER XXXIII.

Auguſt 22.

MY active ſpirits have degenerated into uneaſy indolence:—I cannot employ myſelf; I cannot be idle. I cannot think; I am no longer ſenſible of the beauties of nature, and books are diſtaſteful to me.—When we give ourſelves up, every thing fails us.—I wiſh ſometimes I was a mechanic; when I waked in the morning I ſhould have ſome purſuit, ſome hope, a taſk at leaſt

Digitized by Google

for the day. I often envy Albert when I ſee him buried in a heap of papers and parchments up to his eyes; and I ſay to myſelf, In his place I ſhould be happy.—I have more than once intended to write to you, and to the miniſter, for the employment which you think I might obtain. I believe myſelf I might have it; the miniſter has long ſhewn a regard for me, and has often told me that I ought to ſeek ſome employment. It is the buſineſs of an hour only: But when the fable recurs to me of the horſe, who being weary of his liberty, ſuffered himſelf to be ſaddled and bridled, and then found reaſon to repent;

Digitized by Google

repent; I ſay, when this fable recurs to me, I don't know what to determine upon.—Beſides, my dear friend, this deſire to change my ſituation, is it not the conſequence of that reſtleſs perturbid ſpirit which would equally purſue me in every ſituation in life?

LETTER XXXIV.

August 28.

IF my ills could admit of any cure, they would certainly be cured here.—This is my birth-day—Very early in the morning I received a little parcel from Albert: Upon opening it, I found one of the knots

Digitized by Google

which Charlotte had on her ſleeve the firſt time I ſaw her, and which I had ſeveral times aſked her to give me. Albert had added two volumes in 12mo. of Wolſtein's Homer, which I had wanted for ſome time, the Erneſti edition being inconvenient to carry with me when I walked out. You ſee how they prevent my wiſhes, how well they underſtand all thoſe little attentions of friendſhip, ſo ſuperior to the magnificent preſents of the great, which are humiliating. I kiſſed the ſleeve-knot a thouſand times, and every time I breathed delight from the memory of happy days—days which will never return. Such, my friend,

is

Digitized by Google

is our fate—I do not murmur at it—The flowers of life do but juſt ſhow themſelves.—How many paſs away, and leave no trace behind! how few are ſucceeded by fruit, and the fruit how rarely does it ripen!—Alas! is it not ſtrange, my dear friend, that we ſhould ſuffer to periſh and to decay, the little which remains and ripens? Adieu!

It is the fineſt weather in the world. — In Charlotte's orchard I often climb into a tree and chooſe pears for her; ſhe ſtands under it, and takes them from me as I gather them.

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXXV.

August 30.

WRETCH that I am, do I not take pleaſure in deceiving myſelf, and am I not without underſtanding? — What will become of this ardent and unbounded paſſion?—I addreſs no prayers but to Charlotte; my imagination ſees nothing but her; all that ſurrounds me is of no account, but as it relates to her.—And in this ſtate I enjoy ſome happy hours, till I am obliged to tear myſelf from her: and to that, alas! my heart often forces me. When I have been ſitting by her for two or three hours, quite

Digitized by Google

quite abſorbed by her figure, her attitudes, her divine expreſſions, the ſentiment by degrees takes poſſeſſion of me, and is worked up to the higheſt exceſs: my ſight is confuſed; my breathing is oppreſſed; I hear nothing; my veins ſwell; a palpitation ſeizes my heart, and I ſcarcely know where I am, or whether I exiſt. Then, if ſoft ſenſations do not prevail, as it ſometimes happens,—if Charlotte does not at leaſt allow me the melancholy conſolation to bathe her hand with my tears, I am obliged to leave her, and run and wander about the country. I climb ſteep rocks; I break my way through copſes, amongſt

Digitized by Google

amongſt thorns and briars which tear me to pieces, and I feel a little relief. Sometimes I lie ſtretched on the ground, overcome with fatigue, and dying with thirſt: ſometimes, late in the night, when the moon ſhines upon my head, I lean againſt a bending tree in ſome ſequeſtered foreſt, to eaſe my wrung feet; and quite worn out and exhauſted, I ſleep till break of day. Oh, my friend! the diſmal cell, the ſackcloth, the girdle with ſharp points of iron, would be indulgence and luxury in compariſon of what I now ſuffer.—Adieu.—I ſee no end to theſe torments but the grave.

LETTER

Digitized by Google

LETTER XXXVI.

September 3.

I Will go.—My dear friend, I thank you; I was in doubt and you determine me. I have resolved to leave her this fortnight;—it must be so.—She is returned to the town, and is at the house of a friend; and Albert—and—I will go from hence.

LETTER XXXVII.

September 3.

WHAT a night! I can henceforth bear any thing. My friend, I shall see her no more. Ah! why cannot I fall on your neck, and with floods of tears express all the

Digitized by Google

paſſions which tear my heart! I am ſitting down, and trying to breathe freely, and doing all that is in my power to compoſe my mind;—I am waiting for day-light and the poſt-horſes. Charlotte is at reſt; ſhe does not know that ſhe will ſee me no more. I tore myſelf away; and had the reſolution not to betray my intention, during a converſation which laſted two hours.—Great God! ſuch a converſation!

Albert promiſed me to come with Charlotte into the garden immediately after ſupper. I was upon the terrace, under the thick cheſnut-trees, and ſaw the ſetting ſun; my eyes for the laſt time ſaw him ſink beneath this

Digitized by Google

this delightful valley and ſilent ſtream. I had often been upon the ſame ſpot with Charlotte, and ſeen the ſame glorious ſight, and now — I walked up and down this walk, ſo dear to me: a ſecret ſympathy had often detained me there before I knew Charlotte; and we were pleaſed when, early in our acquaintance, we found we had both had the ſame predilection for this place. Under the cheſnut-trees there is an extenſive view —But I remember that I mentioned this to you before in a letter, and deſcribed how high copſes incloſe the end of it; how the walk through the wood becomes darker and darker, till it ends in a receſs, formed

Digitized by Google

formed by the thickeſt trees, and which has all the charms of gloomy ſolitude. I ſtill remember the tender melancholy which came over my heart the firſt time I entered this ſilent deep retreat. I had certainly a ſecret foreboding, that it would one day be the ſcene of my happineſs and of my torment.

After I had ſpent half an hour in the oppoſite ideas of going away and returning again, I heard them come up the terrace. I flew to meet them, and ſhuddering, I took Charlotte's hand and kiſſed it. Juſt as we reached the top of the terrace, the moon appeared behind a hill covered with wood. Converſing on various

Digitized by Google

various ſubjects we came to the dark receſs: Charlotte went in and ſat down, Albert ſat down by her ſide; I did the ſame.—But my agitation did not ſuffer me to remain long ſeated: I got up and ſtood before her, walked backwards and forwards, ſat down again;—it was a ſtate of violent emotions.

Charlotte made us obſerve a fine effect of moon-light at the end of the wood, which appeared the more ſtriking and brilliant from the darkneſs which ſurrounded the ſpot where we were. We remained for ſome time ſilent; and then Charlotte ſaid, "Whenever I walk by moon-light, it brings to my remembrance all thoſe who

Digitized by Google

who were dear to me, and who are no more; and I think of death and a future ſtate.—Yes, continues ſhe, with a firm but touching voice, "we ſhall ſtill exiſt; but Werter, ſhall we find one another out? Shall we know one another again? What preſages have you? What is your opinion?"

"Charlotte," I ſaid, holding out my hand to her, and my eyes full of tears, "we ſhall again ſee one another here and hereafter." I could ſay no more.—My dear friend, ſhould ſhe have put this queſtion to me, juſt when the thoughts of a cruel ſeparation filled my heart?

"And thoſe perſons who have been dear to us," ſaid ſhe, "and who

Digitized by Google

are now no more, do they know that when we are happy, we recall them to our memory with tenderneſs?—The ſhade of my mother hovers round me, when in a ſtill evening I ſit in the midſt of her children—when I ſee them aſſembled about me, as they uſed to be aſſembled about her! I then raiſe my ſwimming eyes to Heaven, and wiſh ſhe could look down upon us, and ſee that I fulfil the promiſe which I made to her in her laſt moments, to be a mother to her children! A hundred times I have exclaimed, Pardon, deareſt of mothers! pardon me, if I am not to them all that you were!—Alas! I do all that I can; they are properly

Digitized by Google

cloathed and fed, and ſtill more, they are well educated and beloved! If you could behold our mutual attachment, the harmony that ſubſiſts amongſt us, you would give thanks to that Being to whom, dying, you addreſſed ſuch fervent prayers for our happineſs." This ſhe ſaid, my dear friend; but who could repeat all her words? how ſhould cold unfeeling characters catch the expreſſions of ſentiment and genius? Albert gently interrupted her—" My charming Charlotte, you are too much affected: I know theſe recollections are dear to you, but I beg—" "Oh! Albert," ſaid ſhe, "you do not forget, I know you do not, the even-

Digitized by Google

evenings when we three, during the abſence of my father, uſed to ſit at our little round table, after the children were gone to bed. You often had a book in your hand, but you ſeldom read any of it — and who would not have preferred the converſation of that delightful woman to every thing in the world? She was beautiful, mild, chearful, and always active. God knows how often I have knelt before him, and prayed that I might be like her."

I threw myſelf at her feet; I took her hands, and wetting them with my tears, ſaid, "Charlotte! Charlotte! the benediction of Heaven is upon you, and the ſpirit of your

Digitized by Google

mother."—"If you had but known her," ſhe ſaid, and preſſed my hand—"ſhe was worthy of being known to you."—I was motionleſs; never had I received praiſe ſo flattering. "And this woman was to die in the flower of her age; the youngeſt of her children was but ſix months old. Her illneſs was ſhort; ſhe was reſigned and calm; nothing gave her any anxiety but her children, and more particularly the youngeſt. When ſhe found her end approaching, ſhe bade me go and fetch them; and when they were all around her bed, the little ones who did not know their misfortune, and the great ones who were quite overcome with ſorrow,

Digitized by Google

row, ſhe raiſed her feeble hands to Heaven, hung over them, and prayed for them, then kiſſed them one after the other, ſent them back, and ſaid to me, "Be you their mother." I held out my hand to her. "You promiſe much, my child; a mother's fondneſs and a mother's care. Your tears of affection and gratitude have often ſhewn me that you felt what was a mother's tenderneſs—ſhew ſuch tenderneſs to your brothers and ſiſters: and to your father be dutiful and faithful as a wife; you will be his comfort." She aſked for him. He was gone out to hide the bitterneſs of his grief; he felt all that he was to loſe, and his heart was in agonies.

Digitized by Google

"You, Albert, were in the room. She heard ſomebody move; aſked who it was, and deſired you to come to her. She looked at us both with great compoſure and ſatisfaction in her countenance, and ſaid, "They will be happy, they will be happy with one another!" Albert taking her in his arms, cried out, "Yes, Charlotte, we are and ſhall be happy." Even the calm Albert was moved;—I was quite out of my ſenſes.

"And ſuch a woman," ſhe continued, "was to leave us, Werter!—Great God! muſt we thus part with every thing we hold dear in the world? Nobody feels this more keenly than children; they cried and lament-

ed

Digitized by Google

ed for a long time afterwards, that black men had carried away their dear mama!"

Charlotte got up;—it rouzed me—but I remained ſitting and held her hand. "Let us go," ſaid ſhe; "it is quite time." She drew away her hand; I graſped it ſtill cloſer. "We ſhall ſee one another again," I ſaid; "we ſhall find one another out; under whatever form it is, we ſhall know one another. I am going; yes, I am going of my own accord; but if it was for ever, it would be more than I could bear. Adieu, Charlotte! adieu, Albert! we ſhall ſee one another again."—"Yes, to-morrow, I fancy," ſhe added, ſmiling. I felt the

Digitized by Google

the word *to-morrow.* Alas! ſhe ſcarcely knew when ſhe withdrew her hand from me.—She went down the walk : I ſtood and followed her with my eyes, then threw myſelf on the ground in a paſſion of tears ; I got up again, and ran up to the terrace, and there I ſtill ſaw, under the ſhade of the lime-trees, her white gown waving near the garden-gate. I ſtretched out my arms, and ſhe diſappeared!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google